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*Kilmallock, County of Limerick.*

## KILMALLOCK.

A few years since, Kilmallock presented to a reflecting and imaginative mind, a scene of singular, and we might add, intensely romantic interest—that of a noble town, walled, turreted, and filled with stately monasteries, castles, and houses of cut stone, all ruined, silent, and deserted; some wretched peasants had indeed here and there taken up their residence in the corner of a tower or mansion, which, like a solitary figure in a mountain scene, only added to the effect of sadness and desolation. It was at this period that the prefixed sketch was made: Kilmallock has since assumed a different aspect: it has become again a scene of life and animation, and though it has lost much of its poetic and pictorial interest, it will give greater pleasure to the eye of the philanthropist.

Kilmallock has been a place of some distinction from a very remote period, and like most of our ancient towns is of ecclesiastical origin, a monastery having been founded here by St. Maloch in the 6th century, of which the original round tower still remains. It is said to have been a walled town even before the arrival of the Anglo Normans, but at all events it became a place of great strength and celebrity under the Desmond branch of the Geraldines, and ranked as their chief town. Much, however, of its present ruined magnificence is of a period subsequent to the fall of that great family, as the majority of the houses are of the reign of the 1st James, and none of them earlier than that of Elizabeth, when stone mansions first came into use in the chief towns in Ireland. Many of the castles, and the gates, and the surrounding walls, are however connected with the Geraldine power.

Kilmallock has been designated “the Irish BALBEC” by Dr. Campbell, a writer of considerable learning and some imagination; and this high sounding epithet is not undeserved, if properly understood as applying only to a great assemblage of *Irish* ruins, as their magnificence will of course bear but little comparison with those of the Eastern city. These consist at present chiefly of a street of stone built houses, frequently of three stories in height, and having

windows and doorways of cut stone; the former have stone sashes called by architects, mullions, and label mouldings, and the latter are usually arched. These houses have also curious and grotesque spouts, and above the first story, frequently an ornamented architrave, in this style.



There were anciently four great entrance gateways of lofty and imposing character, of which two still remain; and there are also some smaller towers remaining in the surrounding town walls. Outside the town, and on the banks of the beautiful stream called the Cammogue, stand the ruins of two truly splendid monasteries, in which there are several curious and interesting sepulchral monuments: of these, we shall give our readers a view and description in a future number, together with an account of the last chiefs of the Desmonds, the ancient lords of the place, with whose history Kilmallock is so intimately connected.

Kilmallock has been in a state of desolation and decay since the time of the usurper Cromwell, when it was dismantled and otherwise greatly injured by the parliamentary army. The recent return of population is fast hastening the devastations of time, and, excepting its ecclesiastical remains, in a few years it will have but little vestiges of its former splendour. Antiquarians as we are, however, we shall regret this change but little, if it bring industry, wealth, and peace, to a spot that has been for a long period the dreary abode of wretchedness and want. Of its sufferings during the year 1817, when typhus fever raged so frightfully in the South of Ireland, take the following anecdote from the interesting tour of the unfortunate J. B. Trotter—the truth of the circumstances here detailed, may be relied on:—

“In one part of the ruins, where a fine arched side-aisle was still very perfect, my guide showed some terror: I soon learned from him the cause. A person ill of fever had been left there the day before, lest he should communicate the infection to the family where he lodged. He

was left to expire! His hollow voice plaintively implored some drink; I assured him he should have it, and he taken care of, and hope revived at the moment life was ebbing fast away. In another part of this monastery I saw a hat of a departed victim of fever exposed some time ago, and at our Inn I heard the following story:—An American gentleman, totally a stranger, well clad and of pleasing appearance, came a few months ago to Kilmallock. He went to no inn, but wandered about the ruins, till at last entering them he was observed no more, and perhaps forgotten! He was ill, and fever burned in his veins; but where can a penniless and forlorn wanderer turn in a country where he is without friends or money? It happened that a gentleman was ill at the inn, and required the attendance of a person to sit up every night. The inn-keeper's son performed this humane office frequently; and very early one morning, as the stars were fading at the approach of twilight, he walked out to the monastery to refresh himself with the morning air; he heard a murmuring noise of some human being. It was two or three days after the American gentleman's disappearance. He recollected this, and advanced, but can I go on? Extended on his back in a recess of a ruined aisle, the unfortunate stranger lay speechless and expiring! one hand clenched the mouldering wall, the other his hat. The young man terrified and shocked ran for assistance. On his return this victim of misfortune was no more! Fever had arrested his steps."

We shall only add a hope that no future traveller may ever have it in his power to record such instances of the wretchedness and inhumanity of Kilmallock.

### A PEASANT GIRL'S LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE O'HARA TALES.

The county assizes had commenced in my native town, when a new batch of Irish tithe arrangers were brought in prisoners by a strong party of police. They had attacked only the previous evening a gentleman's house, for the purpose of rifling it of arms—had been repulsed by the police, who, aware of their intentions, lay in ambush for them, and lives were lost on both sides. I was idling on one of the bridges, when they passed by to the jail, bound with ropes and with buckles to the common cars of the country—some of them were wounded too, a brow, or hand, or clothing giving vivid evidence of the fact.

But, although the general impression made by the whole of the wretched groups was painful, one face among them strongly interested me. It was that of a young man, not more than nineteen or twenty; his features were comely, and, I would have it, full of goodness and gentleness. His clear blue eye too was neither sulky, nor savage, nor reckless, but seemed to express only great awe of his situation, unless when, from some sudden mental recurrence to home—perhaps it quailed or became suffused with tears. I involuntarily followed the melancholy procession towards the jail, thinking of that young man. After all the prisoners had been ushered into their new abode, a popular anti-tithe attorney, whom I knew, accosted me. He was always ready to conduct, gratis, the defences of poor wretches similarly situated, and he told me his intention of going into the jail that moment, to try and collect materials for saving the lives, at least, of some of the new comers. I expressed a wish to assist him in his task: he readily consented, observing that as the unfortunate men would certainly be put on their trials the next day, no offer of aid, in their favour, was to be disregarded; so we entered the jail together.

It fell to my lot to visit the cell, among others, of the lad who had so much interested me. His assertions, supported, or, not contradicted, by most of his band, seemed to argue, that I had not formed a wrong opinion of his character—nay, better still, that there was a good chance of snatching from the gallows, even though he must leave his native land for ever. He had been forced, he said, to accompany the others upon their fatal sortie—had never been "out" before—and had not pulled a trigger or raised a hand against the police; his more guilty associates supported or else did not contravene his statement. So, con-

fident that the police would also bear him out at the really critical moment, I took notes of his defence for my friend the attorney, and passed on to other cells, but of the results of my continued investigation I will not now speak.

The sagacious attorney was right. By twelve o'clock next day four of the men, including my favourite client, were placed at the bar of their country: three others were too ill of their wounds to be at present produced. All was soon over—and over to my affliction and almost consternation. Instead of swearing that the young man had been comparatively forbearing during the battle outside the gentleman's house, the police, one and all, from some strange mistake—for surely they thought they were in the right, distinctly deposed that his was the hand which slew one of their force, and badly wounded another. In vain did he protest with the energy of a young man pleading for dear, dear life, and all its array of happy promise, against their evidence: in vain did his fellow-prisoners support him: he and they were found guilty in common: but his fate was the terrific one—of him the example was to be made; and while the other men were only sentenced to transportation for life, he was doomed to be hanged by the neck within forty-eight hours, and his body given for dissection.

As the Judge ushered in the last words of his sentence, a shriek, I shall never forget it—a woman's shriek—and a young woman's too, pierced up to the roof of the silent court-house, and then I heard a heavy fall. The young culprit had been trembling and swaying from side to side, during his sentence: at the soul shrilling sound he started into upright and perfect energy; his hands which had grasped the bar of the dock, were clapped together with a loud noise; the blood mounted to his very forehead; his lips parted widely, and, having almost shouted out—"Moya! it's she! I knew she'd be here!" he suddenly made a spring to clear the back of the dock—obviously no impulse to escape dictated the action; he wanted to raise Moya—his betrothed Moya—from the floor of the court-house, and clasp her in his arms—and that was all. And, doubtless, in his vigorous and thrice nerved strength, he must have succeeded in his wild attempt, but that the sleeve of one arm, and the hand of another became impaled on the sharp iron spikes which surmounted the formidable barrier before him. Thus cruelly impeded, however, he was easily secured, and instantly let down, through a trap door in the bottom of the dock, to his "condemned cell," continuing till his voice was lost in the depths beneath us, to call out, "Moya, cuishla-ma-chree, Moya!"

I hastened, with many others, into the body of the court, and there learned, from her father and mother, and other friends, the connexion between her and the sentenced lad. They were to have been married at Easter. This did not lessen my interest in him—my attorney joined me, and we spoke of all possible efforts to obtain a commutation of his sentence, after Moya's parents had forced her out of the court-house, on the way to their home, rejecting all her entreaties to be led into the jail, and—married.

We thought of hearing what the wounded policeman might say. But he was fourteen miles distant, where the affray had occurred, and, even though his evidence might be favourable, we knew we must be prepared to forward it to Dublin, as the Judge would leave our town that day. We set to work, however, mounted two good horses, and within three hours learned from the lips of the wounded man that the Rockite who had fired at him was an elderly and ill favoured fellow. It was our next business to convey our new evidence into the town; we did so, in a carriage borrowed from the person whose house had been attacked. He was confronted with all the prisoners; we cautioned him to say nothing that might give a false hope to the object of our interest;—but, after leaving the cell he persisted in exculpating him from having either killed his comrade or wounded himself, and, moreover, pointed out the real culprit among those who had not yet been put on their trial.

This was a good beginning. An affidavit was soon prepared, which the policeman signed. A few minutes afterwards the attorney, helped in his expenses for the road by some friends, myself among the number, started for Dub-